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AUTHOR MacLeod, Carol
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ABSTRACT

In November, 1995, ABC CANADA and the National Literacy Secretariat hosted a national think tank on principles of good practice in workplace and workforce education. This report contains the results of the think tank sessions, including how the discussion was conducted, a list of good practice statements, and some ideas about how to conduct a similar process. The practice statements involve the following areas: (1) orientation or approach to workplace education and training; (2) partnership and participation; and (3) equity. A list of 34 resources was developed and is included in the report. (KC)

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ED 442 974

Principles of Good Practice in Workplace/Workforce Education: A Report on the Think Tank

November 16-18, 1995

By Carol MacLeod

Sponsored by ABC CANADA and the National Literacy Secretariat

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ABC CANADA, October 1995.

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INTRODUCTION BY THE SPONSORS

In November 1995, ABC CANADA and the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) hosted a national think tank on principles of good practice in workplace / workforce education. Participants at the NLS Policy Conversation on Workplace/Workforce Literacy hosted by ABC CANADA in January 1995 had identified a need to develop a set of good or best practice principles to guide efforts in the workplace. ABC CANADA and the NLS joined together in a unique partnership to Facilitate a discussion about what might constitute good practice in this field.

Our intent was to bring together twenty individuals who had experience in the area of workplace literacy from a variety of different vantage points - business, labour, educators, workplace consultants and government - to ask them what would constitute good practice in workplace / workforce education. A lively and, at times, difficult debate ensued over two days during which participants discussed good practice under the headings of. Partnership & Participation; Assessment; Equiry and Diversity; Principles of Adult Education, Program Content and Delivery; Personnel Management; Program Evaluation; and Program Administration. We were not trying to seek consensus, although we welcomed that when it occurred. We were trying to understand those points of convergence and disagreement in good practice that could be used as a springboard for debate and discussion within the field.

This report contains the results of the think tank:

- how we went about discussing the issues,
- a list of good practice statements that might form the basis of your own good practice document, and
- some ideas about how you might go about conducting a similar process in your organization

The principles outlined in this document are intended to provide a starting point for discussion. Participants at the think tank did not endorse any of these principles but rather offer them up as a menu for discussion. These principles are not intended to be national standards. It is not our intention to produce a national list of good practice principles that might affect funding or other types of support. Rather, we would prefer to see that every organization involved in workplace/workforce education adopt its own set of principles.

It is our hope and the hope of the think tank participants that this information will be a catalyst. At the very least we hope it will provoke thought and stimulate discussion. At best, we hope that it will result in the adoption of principles within your organization.

It is our intent to continue this partnership and host a follow-up meeting to review how this document has been received by the field.

We wish to thank the participants who gave so freely of their time and expertise. We have all grown through the sharing and candour that took place at the think tank.

We also wish to recognize our facilitator Carol MacLeod for her considerable skill and good humour.

For more information on this event, please feel free to contact either of us at the number listed below. We would appreciate hearing from you about how you have used this report to develop your own principles of good practice. For additional copies of this report, please call toll-free ABC CANADA's Workplace Education Centre at 1-800-303-1004.

Sincerely,

Colleen Albiston
Executive Director
ABC CANADA
416-442-2292

Brigid Hayes
Program Consultant
National Literacy Secretariat, HRDC
819-953-5568

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 1995 participants at the NLS Policy Conversation on Workplace/Workforce Literacy hosted by ABC CANADA identified a need to develop good practice principles. In November 1995 ABC CANADA and the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) responded to that need and hosted a national " think tank' on principles of good practice in workplace / workforce education.

We brought together twenty people with experience in workplace education from a variety of areas - business, labour, education, workplace consultants and government - to ask them what would constitute good practice in their field. We were not trying to seek consensus but we were trying to understand the variety of views on good practice.

A set of principles was developed. They were not intended to be national standards but to stimulate discussion in the field. The statements of principle are, with minor variations, reproduced in the report and discussion document exactly as they were developed in the think tank.

We hope that this information will he a catalyst to provoke thought and stimulate discussion. At best, we hope that it will result in the adoption of principles within your organization.

The Process

The sponsors contacted provincial committees (where they existed), the two national central labour bodies and national groups involved in workplace education and asked each of them to select a representative. Once these groups had submitted their designates, a second set of invitations was issued to ensure that the think tank included representatives from a variety of stakeholders.

ABC CANADA commissioned a research paper to provide an overview of the work already accomplished in the area of good practice. This paper was forwarded to the participants for advance reading.

The actual event included small group think tanks, plenary discussions and a survey exercise. Small groups were set up to discuss eight topics and asked to develop and document a list of statements about good practice for discussion during the plenary. During the plenary sessions, each small group reported back on the principles that emerged from their discussions. Areas of agreement and disagreement were noted. A broader discussion ensued for each topic. A survey exercise was developed to enhance our understanding of the good practice statements. A five-point scale (i.e., strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) appeared to the right of each statement. Space for open-ended comments followed the statements.

The final part of the process was the writing of this report and a discussion document which was done in consultation with ABC CANADA and the NLS.

Statements of Good Practice

The statements are listed in Section IV, 'The Participant's Feedback', under the following areas: Partnership and Participation; Assessment; Equity/ Diversity., Principles of Adult Education; Program Content and Delivery; Personnel Management; Program Evaluation, and; Program Administration. This is the core of the think tank project and a starting point for discussions within your organization.

Planning a Think Tank Activity

The last section of this report contains information for your organization on planning a think tank activity. Programs are at different stages in developing principles of good practice. While some have a definitive set of guidelines, others demonstrate good practice based on more informal understandings.

This publication can be used as a catalyst for discussion on many levels. It may serve as a touchstone in reviewing your existing statements of good practice. It may prompt discussions about developing formal guidelines for the first time.

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THE THINK TANK PROCESS

ABOUT THE PROCESS

Pre- Conference Activities

Participant Selection

Individuals with direct experience in workplace workforce basic skills education, from business, labour, education and government were invited to attend. Refer to Appendix I for die list of participants.

The sponsors first contacted provincial committees, where they existed, inviting each of them to select a representative. In the case of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the sponsors asked the Government departments to identify who should represent these provinces.

Invitations were also extended to national groups involved in workplace/workforce literacy (e.g., Frontier College, Laubach Literacy of Canada, ABC CANADA). The two national central labour bodies were invited, although the Canadian Federation of Labour was unable to join us at the table.

Once the groups noted above had submitted their designates, a second set of invitations was issued. In some instances, selection decisions were informed by the initial consultations with provincial bodies. The sponsors wanted to ensure that the group at large, were representative of the variety of programs active in the field. This interest guided the second-tiered selection process.

Research

ABC CANADA commissioned a research paper to provide an over-view of the work already accomplished by Canadian and American workplace stakeholders in the area of good practice.

"A Summary of Principles of Good Practice in Workplace Education Development" (Appendix 2) was forwarded to the participants for advance reading.

Advance Consulting of Participants

Carol MacLeod, the facilitator, contacted each participant by phone after the research paper was distributed. The purpose of the call was twofold: to secure feedback on key issues that the agenda should address and, to piece together an understanding of the unique context framing each participant's involvement in workplace/workforce education.

Finalize Agenda and Process

The agenda and discussion questions were finalized after consulting the majority of participants. The facilitation format was lightly structured to ensure a fair airing of the key issues and maintain flexibility in dealing with issues that would emerge during our deliberations.

On-Site Activities

Opening Session

Brigid Haves (NLS) and Colleen Albiston (ABC CANADA) welcomed the participants and set the context and tone for the think tank. During the Meet & Greet participants were paired with someone whom they likely did not know to break the ice.

In preparation for the next day's session, a Suggested Guide for Self-Introductions was distributed (Appendix 3).

Introduction To Participants

An important aspect of the self-introductions were the presentation of three words or phrases that captured each participant's workplace / workforce paradigm. The intent was to understand the philosophical underpinnings that influence and define various approaches to workplace/workforce education. This proved to be very helpful in making meaning of the various perspectives.

Small-Group Think Tanks

Based on the pre-conference activities, the facilitator identified eight topics/themes for discussion. A grab bag category was created to itemize other issues relating to good practice that had yet to be articulated by the participants.

For each topic, the facilitator prepared questions which were introduced as small-group discussion starters. The small-group think ranks were each tasked with developing a list of statements about good practice for large-group discussion during the plenary sessions. Specific directions were given to document all of the statements articulated during the discussion, regardless of popular support. The statements were recorded on flip charts for presentation during the plenary.

The small-group think tanks consisted of three concurrent discussion groups (in separate rooms), each dealing with a different topic and set of questions. The facilitator and the two sponsors provided facilitation support but did not participate substantively in the discussions. The groups first prioritized the statements; not all groups had time to address every question.

Strategic thought was given to assigning people to the nine small-group think tanks. Consideration was given to ensuring a good mix in each group according to factors such as program model, geography, affiliation, etc.

Plenary Think Tanks

During the plenary sessions, each small-group think tank reported back on the principles of good practice that emerged from their discussions. Areas of agreement and disagreement were noted. A broader discussion ensued for each topic. The plenary sessions were recorded, transcribed, and used in preparing this report and the Discussion Document.

Speaker's Corner

Due to time constraints, the Speaker's Corner was not activated. It was Intended to accommodate the participants general networking and information needs, not strictly related to principles of good practice.

Survey Exercise

A Survey Exercise - with both quantitative and qualitative elements - was developed to enhance the specificity of the information needed to produce a useful report and Discussion Document. The Survey Exercise was scheduled in a 1 1/2 hour time slot at the end of the think tank, just prior to the Closing Remarks.

The survey was built from the participants' statements about good practice developed in the small-group think tanks. Also, there was an opportunity to contribute additional statements in writing for inclusion in the survey. A five-point scale (i.e., strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) appeared to the right of each statement. Space for open-ended comments followed the statements and scales for each topic.

At the request of the participants, a second copy of the survey was made available to those who wanted to spend more time in reflection. The option of mailing It directly to the facilitator by December 8, 1995 was provided, on the understanding that a survey would also be completed on site. Only one participant returned a second survey.

Evaluation

Evaluation forms were anonymously completed by the participants at the end of the think tank. The individual evaluations were tabulated into an Evaluation Report.

Post- Conference Activities

Drafting The Discussion Document

The facilitator, in close consultation with the sponsors, drafted this report. It must be acknowledged that the participants are the de facto authors because their ideas are at die heart of this document.

A detailed explanation of how the participants' feedback was synthesized is provided on page 10.

Publishing An Abbreviated Version

The February 1996 edition of Literacy at Work, published by ABC CANADA, featured an article/discussion document about the think tank. A condensed version of this report, it summarizes the main points with little elaboration. This method of communication reached a large audience across Canada.

Importantly, the article announced that the full report is available, in both official languages, from ABC CANADA's Workplace Education Centre. (Call toll free 1-800-303-1004.)

The abbreviated version is reproduced here under the title of Executive Summary.

Action From The Field

It is the sponsors' hope that this report will be of assistance in developing principles of good practice for the first time or reviewing existing guidelines.

Distributing this report among people in your network is recommended as a starting point for discussion. Secondly, you are encouraged to take action by designing and implementing activities that will result in a customized set of best practice guidelines.

You may wish to develop your own think tank activity and use the process outlined in this document as a template. V. Planning A Think Tank Activity and the Appendices were included for that purpose.

Leadership at all levels is required to create a deeper understanding of how to develop and apply principles of good practice. Action from the field at large is a necessary prerequisite to a follow-up conference.

Follow-Up Conference

The participants strongly urged the sponsors to consider organizing a follow-up conference. ABC CANADA and the National Literacy Secretariat intend to host a follow-up meeting to review how this document has been received by the field.

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THE THINK TANK PROCESS

AGENDA AT A GLANCE

EVENING: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16,1995

Opening Session

7:00 - 7:15	Welcome & Open Remarks
7:15 - 7:30	Presentation of Agenda
7:30 - 9:00	Meet & Greet

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1996

Setting The Context

9:00 - 10:00	Introduction to Participants Key Issues : Small-Group Think Tanks
10:00 - 11:30	#1 Partnership & Participation (include. Break) #2 Assessment #3 Equity/Diversity
11:30 - 12:45	Plenary Think Tank Key Issues: Small-Group Think Tanks
1:45 - 3:00	# 1 Principles of Adult Education #2 Program Content & Delivery #3 Personnel Management
3:00 - 3:15	Break
3:15 - 4:30	Plenary Think Tank
4:30 - 5:00	Speaker's Corner
6:30	DINNER: An informal opportunity to network and continue our conversations

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18,1995

Key Issues :Small-Group Think Tanks

9:00 - 10:15	#1 Program Evaluation #2 Program Administration #3 Grab Bag* *Key issues identified by the participants during the course of our deliberations
10:15 - 10:30	Break
10:30 - 12:00	Plenary Think Tank

Identifying Areas of Consensus & Divergence in Principles of Good Practice

1:00 - 2:30	Survey Exercise
2:30 - 2:45	Break
2:45 - 3:00	Closing Remarks
3:00 - 3:15	Evaluation

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THE THINK TANK PROCESS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Partnership & Participation

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1. Is partnership an essential feature in most workplace education development? How does the notion of partnership differ across programs?

2. What steps should be taken to ensure that all stakeholders have the capacity to participate on an equal and Informed basis?

3. In your experience, does each partner give sufficient forethought to ensuring the long-term financial stability of the program and what commitments they are prepared to make in this regard?

4. What would promote collaboration among small companies which lack the resources to mount a workplace education program on their own for a relatively small number of employees?

5. Is there a relationship between the type of financial and **time** commitments made by the learners and the learners' success in reaching their goals?

Assessment

---

1. Is the use of an organizational needs assessment now a standard practice

2. What differentiates the assumptions and methodology used to conduct organizational needs assessments?

3. What guidelines should be considered In conducting individual assessments of needs, skills and abilities?

4. What is the role of resting and measurement with respect to understanding individual needs, skills and abilities?

5. How do you monitor individual progress? What determines success?

Equity / Diversity

1. How does the principle of equity - play itself out in various workplace/workforce education programs?

2. In what ways should personnel reflect the cultural and racial diversity of the potential learners?

3. What issues arise in ascertaining whether or not program content, intake procedures, and facilities are physically, culturally, and socially appropriate to a particular group of learners?

4. How should programs market themselves in a way that reaches out to diverse groups in an inclusive manner?

Principles of Adult Education

---

1. What characterizes the successful implementation of adult education principles in workplace/workforce education?

2. What is the best approach to supervising personnel to ensure their adherence to principles of adult education?

3. How should prior learning assessment, and the emerging notion of portfolio development for workers, be approached in workplace/workforce education programs?

Program Content & Delivery

---

1. What implication does a worker-centred model ('.e., workers' goals drive the program) have for program contents?

2. What implications does a functional model (i.e., training needs of the employer/industry drive the program) have for program content?

3. What principles are embedded in the delivery options that are commonly used among the programs that you are familiar with?

Personnel Management (teaching staff, volunteers, consultants)

---

1. How do you determine the qualification requirements of practitioners?

2. In what way should programs promote or facilitate professional development?

3. What would you recommend to consultants in terms of maintaining a balance between business and industry requirements for workplace literacy and basic skills development for members of the community?

Program Evaluation

---

1. Is there validity to the perception that workplace/ workforce education programs to date have been characterized by a warm and fuzzy approach to evaluation?

2. How do you respond to the demands for a more accountable approach to program evaluation?

3. When is the most appropriate time to establish the

program evaluation process?

Program Administration

---

1. What is your view on the need for a clearly articulated philosophy statement that explicitly states the program's beliefs, assumptions and goals in a meaningful way.
2. What policies and procedures are you familiar with

that respond to various issues around confidentiality?

3. What steps should be taken to ensure some type of financial stability for the program?

4. How should programs market themselves and recruit new students?

Grab Bag

---

1. Do you experience resistance from middle management? If so, what strategies would build support at this level?

2. When organizations act as brokers for workplace / workforce educators, do they have

an obligation to "Screen" based on best practice standards/ principles?

3. In numerous workplaces and workforce development situations in northern / remote communities the main language of business is an Aboriginal language. Can this group make a statement to support the direct involvement of Aboriginal groups in developing workplace/workforce best practices and principles?

4. Is the use of an organizational needs assessment now a standard practice?

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THE PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Section At A Glance

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1. SETTING THE CONTEXT
2. PARTNERSHIP & PARTICIPATION
3. ASSESSMENT
4. EQUITY/DIVERSITY
5. PRINCIPLES OF ADULT EDUCATION
6. PROGRAM CONTENT & DELIVERY
7. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
8. PROGRAM EVALUATION
9. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Grab Bag Feedback

The statements developed by the small-group think tank discussing questions tabled in the grab bag, along with related feedback, were integrated into the other topics as appropriate.

Understanding the Participants' Feedback in Context

The central piece of this document is, of course, a summary of the participants' feedback. Capturing the ideas ant perspectives that the think tank unleashed was a challenging cask.

By design, the participants had three different venues to forward their views:

1. developing statements about good practice, collectively and Individually, during and after the small-group think tanks;
2. voicing opinions and commenting on the points raised by others during the plenary discussions; and,
3. privately documenting thoughts in writing through the survey exercise near the end of the think tank.

The first two venues are characterized by a public and oral focus. The transcript of the plenary sessions was an invaluable tool used in analyzing our conversations.

In contrast, the survey exercise provided an opportunity for each participant to

confidentially communicate the cumulative impact of the interactions with their peers. In addition to allowing for a measure of quantitative analysis, this communication took the form of the written word. The survey data was helpful in pinpointing the full range of opinions. There was an abundance of impromptu notes jotted near the statements, in addition to feedback prompted by the comment sections. This enhanced the degree of specificity with respect to the reasons for various opinions as well as suggestions for wording. In some instances, the opinions voiced during the conversations were revisited in the survey with the wisdom and clarity that hindsight sometimes brings.

This analysis draws on the information gained from all three sources and recognizes that each source was invaluable in the unique way that it shed light and meaning. It also demanded extensive and patient analysis.

A special word to the think tank participants reading this report is in order. Keep in mind that you had access to the public conversations but not the private feedback communicated through the survey. Both are rooted in the voices of the participants; both are essential to a balanced analysis.

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THE PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

PARTNERSHIP& PARTICIPATION

Strongly Agree

Partnership among stakeholders is necessary for successful workplace / workforce basic skills programs.

Agree

Partnerships in workplace / workforce programs include two tiers:

(i) primary partnerships between employees and employers; and,
(ii) associate or external partnerships (e.g., providers, fielders, facilitators).

Initially, discussions centred on whether or not the funder was considered an equal partner. It evolved to a recognition that the differing roles of the partners was the real issue, not equality.

The analogy of a circle with inner and outer rings was used to indicate that each partner has a unique role at different distances from the centre. The primary partnership is between the major players at the workplace; associate partnerships enable the process and are often considered resources to the primary partners. The learners are at the core.

Support for the program from the top labour, management and opinion leaders in the work place is key to the program's success and longevity.

Resistance from middle management is an ongoing issue which may pose problems even in the face of high-level management support.

Partners must he provided with or have access to information to help them better understand the issues and to allow them to fully participate in the partnership.

At the outset of an educational initiative at the workplace, partners often need to enhance their knowledge and awareness of basic skills issues to facilitate sound decision making. This does not imply that there should be access to confidential information.

A company's policy with respect to paid time or training should be fairly and consistently applied alike to employees participating in a basic skills program and managers participating in professional development activities.

The facilitator reworked this statement from the original for clarity after the think rank. It reinforces that workers should be accorded the same level of respect and opportunities as management.

With respect to participating in life-long learning, the administrative supports offered to management and employees should be consistent.

The absence of a definition of administrative supports was pointed out.

Paid and volunteer practitioners are an into part of the partnership and should promote the program philosophy and work within its parameters.

The facilitator reworked this statement from the original for clarity after the think tank.

In selecting service providers the decision rests with the stakeholders. Brokers may assist stake holders in developing selection criteria based on best practices and principles.

This statement was developed by the small-group think tank dealing with grab bag issues. The issue was tabled out of concern about obligations and ethics when asked to make recommendations about qualified service providers.

There was concurrence that it is important to encourage partners to come up with their own criteria and assist in that process.

The group was advised that ABC CANADA is finishing up a directory, developed in consultation with the groups that do workplace literacy in each province. It will be making referrals based on the information provided.

The business community should be encouraged to consider collaborative strategies to create opportunities for small business to participate in workplace education programs. Possible collaborators include community-based groups and larger employers that have existing programs.

Our conversations spoke to the unique situation of small businesses which often have modest financial resources.

Divergent Opinions

Governments are integral partners in workplace / workforce education programs.

It was reinforced that governments play different roles across Canada - from arm's-length relationships to very active players that provide expertise and other support mechanisms in addition to funding. Hence, disagreement hinged on the use of the word integral while there was concurrence that governments are partners at various levels of involvement.

THE PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

ASSESSMENT

Strongly Agree

The guidelines in conducting individual assessments should use a process that develops self-confidence and self-esteem and is employee driven.

Many of those agreeing with this statement did so with reservations about the phrase *employee-driven*. One individual thought that it excluded the role of other partners.

Consider these revisions suggested by various participants in the survey. replacing *employee-driven* with *employee sensitive* or *participant-centred* and, replacing is *employee-driven* with *supports employee goals.*

Agree

Assessment is an ongoing and developmental process that begins with a one-on-one interview.

One individual amended this to read *usually begins* because of situations where learners self-select into upgrading following a self assessment (i.e., no interview). Another disagreed because it was felt that assessment starts with an organizational/situational analysis.

Assessment tools must also raise levels of awareness about learning and promote self-directed learning and ongoing self-assessment.

A dissenter noted that raising awareness is important but not necessarily needed in assessment tools.

If testing is used, it should be employee- driven on a voluntary basis and the results kept confidential.

There was a sense that, as the field matures, there is a growing recognition that resting has some value. It was summed up nicely when someone said: "We are not trying to say that testing is bad, but that testing has a context." The context should include: a relationship of trust; respect for the employee's choice to participate; and, a commitment that testing will not be used in any way to negatively impact the participant.

Once again, the term employee-driven proved problematic for some.

If testing is used, it should not be the only indicator of progress.

A suggestion for restating this principle was lodged: "Testing is only one indicator of progress. "

The use of screening tests for hiring or entry into skills training programs should include a strategy to: offer advice on preparing for the test; feedback results in a diagnostic manner; and, facilitate opportunities for learning.

One individual disagreed with this statement thinking that screening tests for hiring were not relevant to the discussion. A dislike for medical models (i.e., diagnostic) was also expressed.

A second participant's strong disagreement was rooted in a preference for an activity that was more integrated than screening tests. Another noted that entry to basic skills programs should not depend on testing.

An organizational / situational analysis should be conducted to determine the needs of all partners and identify barriers and supports before program content is decided and individual needs assessed.

The facilitator reworked this statement from the original for clarity after the think tank.

The prescriptive nature of this statement prompted a response that, although an organizational/situational analysis is important in some cases, it doesn't need to be conducted in all cases. Also, some felt that this statement was probing the same areas as one that follows on Organizational Needs Assessment.

An Organizational Needs Assessment (ONA) is a holistic and strategic planning tool and is a necessary first step to effective workplace / workforce education, training, and development.

This statement was developed by the small-group think tank dealing with grab bag issues. There was a question about the meaning of holistic. The response was that it suggests looking at basic skills in the context of whatever else is going on in the organization and not isolating it from the workplace.

Generally, the support for this statement was based on the importance of the ONA. Disagreement arose because an ONA was not seen as necessary in all situations. More palatable substitutes for necessary include suggested and preferable.

Another view about the utility of an ONA is premised on how an ONA is used - whether program goals are deduced from the it and "laid on" or whether the information is used as a background against which program participants set their own goals.

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THE PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

EQUITY / DIVERSITY

Agree

Equity issues should include consideration of many elements including, but not limited to: race, religion, culture, labour / management, gender, regions, large vs. small, urban/rural, age, language and education.

The facilitator reworked this statement from the original for clarity after the think tank.

This statement was presented on the components that might be considered when trying to understand workplace equity issues. The list is not intended to be exhaustive but rather serves as a stimulus in thinking about other elements. Sexual orientation, profession, and disabilities were also tabled for consideration.

The issues around a common understanding of the definition of equity are unique for each workplace.

This statement was viewed as ambiguous, even though its intent was supported. In its stated form the concern was that, even though equity issues vary across workplaces, the principles of equity are non-negotiable. Our discussions lead to this interpretation: the equity issues that are there and have to be dealt with depend on the composition of the workplace, but the definition is non-negotiable.

Suggestions for revision follow:
(i) The equity issues are unique for each workplace.
(ii) The issues around a common understanding of the definition of equity reflect the uniqueness of each workplace.

We recognize that equity / diversity must be built into the process from the beginning.

While garnering wide support, a cautious undertone emerged since equity can be taken very differently by different people. The words of one participant reflect this caution: "There are many diversities which can not be solved at our level even though we have great intentions and a good heart."

One individual expressed a strong concern about linking equity / diversity issues with basic skills while acknowledging their importance. Linking the two was seen as akin to mounting two battles which may inadvertently put the primary educational objective at risk. A seconder suggested that going in to a workplace with a list of equity issues up front would be problematic. Starting with the statement that the notion of equity is built on the assumption of respect for individual learners would initiate a positive discussion.

Another keyed in on the phrase *must be* and expressed some difficulty in taking this on but no problem working to this goal.

We must not perpetuate barriers and should act as a catalyst for creating an equitable / diverse workplace in a respectful way by identifying systemic barriers and working towards solutions.

A suggested revision: *Workplace programs must not perpetuate barriers and can act as a catalyst for creating an equitable / diverse workplace by identifying systemic barriers and contributing to change.*

Principles of equity should inform program content, process, methodology, development.

The facilitator reworked this statement from the original for clarity after the think tank.

Timing was explicitly noted by one participant.

Divergent Opinions

Educators themselves should he reflective of the workplace.

A Business representative argued that delivery should happen outside of the workplace (e.g. in colleges) because literacy is a specialty field. Understanding the workplace is one thing, but coming from the workforce is another. In response was a concern that literacy activities in Canada are undervalued and keeping it distinct and different will hamper efforts to incorporate it into ongoing programming. A second Business voice noted that educators must be selected on the basis of competency.

Labour representatives argued that there are valuable benefits to workplace delivery that relate to changing the workplace culture itself. These programs come out of equity issues because they create access to upgrading which allows people the option of bridging to the education or training ladder.

The suggestion that educators go through the workplace so that they have an idea of the worker's context was also advocated.

Aboriginal people have a unique place in Canada and their right to be literate in their first language should be respected in work place / workforce delivery and development.

This statement was developed by the small-group think tank dealing with grab bag issues. The issue of Aboriginal languages was tabled by a participant with experience administering workforce education programs in the north. It was pointed our that there are many workplaces in the north where an Aboriginal language is the language of business and this should be respected.

Although a small majority agreed with this statement to varying decrees, an almost equal number declined to voice an opinion. Among those who agreed, one indicated agreement only, where numbers warrant and another where it is the predominant language. Another noted that some thought should be given to the reality that Government may agree.

Initially, the small-group think tank itemized three distinct language categories: Aboriginal languages; heritage languages; and Canada's two official languages. The next statement emerged from discussions on the heritage languages. With respect to the third category, participants in the small-group think tank did nor feel capable of coming up with statements about official languages, particularly because there is still so much debate going on. They felt the field should explore best practices around official languages in context.

Within the multi-cultural context of Canada, it should be recognized that people have the right to be literate in their first language when the heritage language is the predominant language of the work place community.

The plenary discussion was anchored around two extremes: the reality that some workplaces and communities exclusively use a first language; and, that this was politically correct but unrealistic.

The funding implications in times scarce resources was a recurring theme among those who did not agree. A Government representative elaborated that the use of the term *right* generally implies that public funding will support it. If we already have little funding to teach English and/or French where will the money come from to teach other languages?

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THE PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

PRINCIPLES OF ADULT EDUCATION

Strongly Agree

The principles of adult education include: valuing experience; using materials that are appropriate to adults and the workplace; building on the knowledge of learners; treating learners as adults and with respect; recognizing that people learn from each other, using ongoing evaluation; recognizing different learning styles; and recognizing that adults have a variety of responsibilities and time commitments.

The facilitator reworked this statement from the original for clarity after the think tank.

Good practice applies to both external trainers and internal trainers.

Broadening the application to reinforce that good practice applies to everyone involved in workplace / workforce education was suggested.

Recognize that adults are decision makers themselves, and ensure their input in designing programs

This was rewarded from the original for clarity.

Some wanted this statement to reflect a stronger role for adults making it clear that participants are an integral part of the design process.

Agree

Mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that practitioners use good adult education principles.

Cross reference this statement to the first one listed in the Strongly Agree section. Of the two, this statement was developed first and prompted the need to flesh our the principles of adult education.

There should he recognition for the prior learning of adults.

The facilitator reworked this statement from the original for clarity after the think tank.

There is a need for recognition of competency at the recruitment level which

requires understanding the competency levels of jobs.

The intent of this statement was not clear to several people. Our discussions implied that the recruitment of facilitators was being referenced.

One individual noted that facilitators should be: interviewed by the employer, union, and an experienced educator; provided with initial training; and, subject to follow-up support and training.

A Labour representative pointed out that, where seniority Is a factor, provisions should be made to either allow skills to be acquired prior to the recruitment or be developed during a trial period.

Divergence of Opinion

That programs have something in it for the learner.

Although a small majority agreed with this statement because of ' Its underlying intent, the quality of the statement itself was questioned by many. One person strongly disagreed with It because of the weak and vague use of the word something. Others felt that it was a given if the other statements of good practice are in effect.

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THE PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

PROGRAM CONTENT & DELIVERY

Strongly Agree

Voluntary participation is necessary for successful programs

Program content and delivery should support and encourage the development of portable skills and life-long learning.

Worker voices are required for a program to be worker-centred.

There was a need to define what constituted worker-centred. It was observed that some programs claim to be worker-centred but are based on an interpretation of what the workers want without any consultation.

Principles regarding the structuring of programs shall embody flexible and relevant learning, including convenient times and locations, as well as self-paced learning.

Program content and delivery should increase participants' ability to transfer learning to other aspects of their personal lives as well as enhance the skills required for the workplace.

The facilitator reworked this statement from the original for clarity after the drink tank.

Agree

Worker-centred models will likely include program content that is relevant to the workplace/workforce.

One suggestion was to replace *worker-centred with learner-centred* to keep the focus on the learner. Several suggested replacing *will likely with should.*

Worker needs and workplace / workforce needs are not mutually exclusive.

The framework and structure of a workplace/work force program should include the interests of partners.

There is motivation to learn.

Although the majority agreed with this statement, a significant number declined to state an opinion. As stated it begs for clarity. Questions that may lead to more specificity follow: Is there always a motivation to learn? Is the motivation internal or external to the workplace? Should program content include motivational ideas? Does success hinge on the level of motivation before beginning the program?

Embedding or integrating basic skills into technical or skills training can increase access and equity in training.

Many of the participants shared examples drawn from their successful practical application of this approach.

One person disagreed advocating that there should be a standard adult basic academic program that is able to be modified for any workplace. Another disagreed on the basis that adapting mandatory technical programs (e.g., WHMIS), although necessary, may become a replacement for more meaningful attention to basic skills upgrading.

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THE PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Agree

There is a need for strategic approaches to professional development for practitioners.

There was wide concurrence with this statement. Some thought that the exclusive focus on practitioners did not reinforce that professional development is needed for other key players (e.g., partners).

In determining practitioner qualifications work place / workforce models should place high value on attitude and prior learning and consider academic qualifications as required.

The plenary discussion drew out on two central points: accrediting practitioner training in explicit ways; and, concern about credentials, especially academic qualifications, becoming barriers to attracting volunteers, peers, etc. who may be quite capable.

Additional qualifications seen as valuable include: sensitivity; experience in workplace / workforce literacy training; appreciation of the politics of the workplace; modelling of life-long learning; respect for the points of view of all stakeholders.

In small communities it is very important to develop the people who are in the community. Some small communities have a tendency to overlook people who are not educated. In large or small communities, there should be some basic requirements with room to adapt to very specific problems where an instructor is hard to find.

An alternative perspective was that employees like to think the instructor knows more than they do and an experienced coworker may not cut it.

It should be explicitly recognized that the involvement of paid and volunteer practitioners and program supporters is an opportunity to enhance their skills and contribute more to their workplaces and communities.

This statement was not clear to all. Program supporters is a global reference to all those non-practitioners who contribute to a program (e.g., people who sit on committees). This statement implies that one of the positive spin offs of being involved in a program is that newly acquired skills and confidence may be more widely used in other applications.

The determination of practitioner qualifications should be defined by the workplace / workforce model.

One individual disagreed with this statement due to a concern that, if a professional wasn't involved in training, organizations would try to do it by themselves. Another point of disagreement was based on the recurring theme that education is not enough - experience in workplace / workforce literacy is needed. Many educators have never taught adults and never been inside a factory.

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THE PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Strongly Agree

Participants are recognized for their achievement.

All partners should be involved in establishing key success factors that are relevant to them.

Agree

There must be agreement among partners on how success will be measured.

Adequate fielding should be in place for evaluation.

Evaluation strategies must start at the beginning of program development.

Evaluation must start before a program begins. It is important that one determines, before the beginning, realistic objectives for the learner, the group and for the company if you want the evaluation to try to measure progress.

Cross reference the two statements boxed in dotted lines. There was clear cut support for the first statement and that it appears that it was primarily the elaboration in the second sentence of the second statement that attracted wide support.

It is important to ensure that management is aware of the issues and those benefits that are not easily measured to prepare them for what can and cannot be evaluated.

Several people who agreed with this statement suggested that the word management be replaced by partners. The context for the singular focus on management came from the need to promote workplace / workforce education as an investment and not an expense.

Evaluation can be measured on four levels:
(i) participant satisfaction;
(ii) knowledge acquisition;
(iii) knowledge transfer,
(iv) the impact on business and or other stakeholders.

Evaluation is an ongoing, organic process through the life of the program.

Formative evaluation rather than summative, should be used.

The facilitator reworked this statement from the original for clarity after the think tank.

Three people disagreed with the second sentence, noting that both formative and summative evaluation are important.

Evaluation should include quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is for use in general terms which are not specific to a particular learner.

The rationale for the second sentence is that evaluation should not negatively impact the participants in any way.

Qualitative and quantitative evaluation should be used for continuous improvement of the program and established practices.

Suggested rewording: *"Qualitative and quantitative evaluation should be used for enhancing programs and established practices. "*

Program evaluation should include the qualitative observations of key stakeholders that relate to the program's impact. This includes feedback from middle management.

Middle managers are in a unique position to observe improvements that may be attributed to the workplace program.

If middle managers are not he part of the evaluation process, their feedback should be actively solicited.

One recommendation was to replace the word key with all.

Evaluation should he prepared considering the different and changing audiences that will use it. (Considerations include dear language. New groups that will use material include teams.)

Practitioners must have knowledge of the business environment.

Feedback from the Labour representatives pointed out that it is important to have knowledge of the business and labour environments - that is to say, the environments of the primary partners.

Program evaluation is a means to measure for program improvement. All participants involved in the program could do some of this work.

Success is measured by achieving learning objectives rather than hours spent in learning.

One individual noted that the criteria for success should not be predetermined and that the partners should be involved in establishing the criteria.

Evaluation should include the cost of the program for comparison with other training groups.

While almost one half of the participants agreed with this statement, almost one third disagreed. The remaining participants held no opinion.

Exception was taken to the prescriptive nature of this statement. It does not acknowledge that the goals of stakeholders should drive the type of documentation required.

Practitioners should be skilled with other cultural / linguistic / backgrounds.

The facilitator reworked this statement from the original for clarity after the think tank.

This statement did not capture wide support, with approximately one third of the participants in agreement. People were not comfortable with . a blanket statement that is divorced from any reference to the makeup of the workforce. It must be appropriate to the situation

The use of the word skilled could exclude a lot of good tutors; try substituting sensitive to for skilled with.

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THE PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Strongly Agree

All stakeholders in a program should agree on and respect procedures regarding confidentiality.

Agree

Wherever possible, involve peers for marketing, recruitment and counseling in a company and union. It is important to create a spirit of trust, respect and mutual cooperation.

Contrast this statement to its close twin (also boxed in dotted lines) listed in the Divergence of Opinion column. The debate centred on the use of *mutual cooperation versus solidarity*. Many agreed with both statements with the caveat that the use of one or the other was situational depending on the workplace. Of the two versions, this one received greater popular support across the board and a lower degree of disagreement.

Many felt that the use of the relatively generic term *mutual cooperation* was in keeping with the reality that there are both union and non-union programs and companies. Those who disagreed with using the word *solidarity* argued that is loaded with union connotations and this may unnecessarily raise barriers among potential Business partners.

Several Labour representatives vociferously argued that solidarity is a word that also has meaning in a societal context.

Financial stability is essential to implementing and maintaining good practice.

There was a thread of concern that financial stability and good practice should have nothing to do with each other.

Public funders should have a level of expertise in understanding literacy development.

A Quebec-based example of Business receiving money through the tax credit law featured a different point. Even though the Ministry of Revenue has no expertise in literacy development, the money was gladly accepted.

There should be a clearly articulated philosophy statement that explicitly states the progress belief, assumptions and goals in a meaningful way.

In saying that this is the first thing that is sought out, a Government representative reinforced the importance of communicating the essence of a program. A philosophy statement is a useful tool in ensuring that stakeholders understand and support a shared vision and signaling this consensus to others.

Another noted that the right to learn is a component of many such statements. Each place has to define Its own philosophy with the partners involved.

Divergence of Opinion

Wherever possible, involve peers for marketing, recruitment and counseling in a company and union. It is important to create a spirit of trust, respect and solidarity.

Contrast this statement to its close twin (also boxed in dotted lines) listed in the Agree column. The debate centred on the use of *mutual cooperation versus solidarity.* Many agreed with both statements with the caveat that the use of one or the other was situational depending on the workplace. Of the two versions, this one received less popular support across the board and a significant degree of disagreement.

Many felt that the use of the relatively generic term *mutual cooperation* was in keeping with the reality that there are both union and non-union programs and companies. Those who disagreed with using the word *solidarity* argued that is loaded with union connotations and this may unnecessarily raise barriers among potential Business partners.

Several Labour representatives argued that *solidarity* is a word that also has meaning in a societal context.

Funding should be on a two to three year cycle tailored to the needs of the program.

Although the majority of people agreed with this statement, a significant contingent resisted stating a specific time line which may not necessary apply. The need for financial stability is really the point.

A Business representative commented that financial commitments are made on a yearly basis in most organizations because of the budget/stability factor and that this has nothing to do with respect for basic skills programs.

Deliverers/providers should he involved in marketing / assessment and recruitment.

A small majority agreed with this statement; however, there was significant disagreement and indifference. One line of thought stressed that the situational context should be the guide. For example, in some workplaces it is better to let the partners play that role.

Another refocussed the issue on communication: "Deliverers / providers should facilitate

a communication strategy about programs. "

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PLANNING A THINK TANK ACTIVITY

From Vision to Reality

Programs are at different stages in attaining consensus around principles of good practice. While some have a definitive set of guidelines, others demonstrate good practice based on comparatively informal understandings.

Ideally, as the field grows and develops, all workplace/workforce programs will have clearly articulated principles of good practice. How does the field make this vision a reality?

This report is a catalyst for discussion on many levels. It may serve as a touch stone in reviewing your existing statements of good practice. It may prompt discussions about developing formal guidelines for the first time.

Planning a Think Tank Activity

The think tank process used by ABC CANADA and the National Literacy Secretariat is available as a template. You are welcome to use it as is, or adapt it to meet your specific needs. Different processes will all prompt critical thinking about good practice in workplace/workforce education.

The following generic questions may assist you in planning your own activity - whatever form it ultimately takes.

I. What stage are you at with respect to having consensus on principles of good practice?

Get an accurate reading of the current status of your formal or Informal guidelines about good practice.

Perhaps You haven't reviewed your good practice guidelines in the past few years. There may have been personnel and program changes that should inform a new consensus.

Perhaps a previous effort at developing principles of good practice was detailed? The program's history is also a source of information.

Perhaps developing principles of good practice has been a long-standing goal but simply

hasn't made it to the top of the priority list.

II. What are your goals with respect to good practice?

A broader discussion among your partners may be necessary to clarify your goals. Begin the dialogue needed to arrive at a shared understanding of where you are and where you want to be.

Your goal may be to review and update existing principles of good practice in light of current thinking in the field. Alternatively, your goal may be to develop good practice statements from scratch. Building consensus among partners is inherent in these examples.

The goal of our think tank was to review existing materials, discuss principles of good practice, and identify areas where there are agreement and differences. In contrast to the context framing your goals., we did not seek to attain consensus around principles of good practice.

III. What process will help you achieve your goals?

Your specific goals in the area of good practice are the foundation for designing a process that will help you achieve them. Review the think tank process outlined in this document as a stimulus for designing your own approach.

Our think tank process was characterized by the use of small-group discussions, focused on specific questions, followed by large-group plenary discussions. Since consensus was not part of our mandate, the process did not include a consensus-building exercise. Instead, a survey exercise gauged opinion.

The type of developmental activity that you use is limited only by your imagination. The options range

from relatively modest activities to those more elaborate in design and scope:

- discussing best practices during regularly-scheduled meetings;
- empowering a committee to file a report with recommendations;
- planning a full-blown, retreated think tank; or,
- integrating it into conferences that draw a variety of people in the field.

Regardless of the process that you select, there are some elements that probably should be kept in mind. Chief among them is inviting a representative sample of the partners to the table. Hearing the voices of the partners is central to any process.

Also important is an awareness that the written word forces a higher degree of clarity and specificity than the spoken word alone. Be sensitive to the reality that people have different communication and information-processing preferences. As a supplement to discussions a written set of statements is essential to a consensus-seeking exercise. This may be administered on-site or as a post-conference follow-up.

IV. Who should you invite to provide feed back on a draft version of

good practice statements?

The process used should bear fruit in the form of good practice statements to he circulated to a wider audience. Create an opportunity for interested partners, at all levels of involvement, to provide feedback. Others in the field, not directly involved with your program, are also valuable sources of expertise.

V. How will your finalized statements on good practice inform program policy and practice?

Integrate your customized principles of good practice into all aspects of program policy and practice. For example, determine how they will impact on practitioner recruitment/hiring practices. How will they be communicated to existing and potential learners? What are the implications, if any, for funding?

VI. How will you ensure that your statements of good practice stay current?

As a developing field, workplace / workforce education is in the early stages of its evolution. Additionally, programs mature and change over time. Principles of good practice should not be viewed as static. Subjecting principles of good practice to ongoing review is a wise strategy.

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APPENDIX 1:

List Of Participants

Denis Bellemare
Kraft General Foods Canada Inc.
Ville Mont-Royal PQ

Lloyd Campbell
*Alberta Workplace Literacy
Advisory Comm.
(Syncrude Canada Limited)
Fort McMurray, AB

Carolyn Dieleman
Alberta Advanced Education &
Career Development
Edmonton, AB

Sue Folinsbee
*ABC CANADA
Workplace Education Centre
Don Mills, ON

Lynda Fownes
*B.C. Workforce Training
Consortium
(Skillplan)
Burnaby, BC

Hilke Grunys
*W/WEBS
(Confederation College)
Thunder Bay, ON

Martin Hanratty
*Canadian Labour Congress
Ottawa, ON

John Mackey
Fish, Food & Allied Workers
Union
St.John's, NF

Greg Maruca
*Workplace Education Manitoba
Committee
(Amalgamated Clothing & Textile

Martin Mockler
Dept of Advanced Education & Labour
*Government of New Brunswick
Fredericton, NB

Blair Nixon
Peterborough Paper Converters
Peterborough, ON

Sarah Thompson
Learning in the Workplace
Frontier College
Toronto, ON

Ron Torgerson
*Saskatchewan Literacy Network
(Workers' Education for Skills Training, WEST)
Regina, SK

Sue Turner
Manitoba Education & Training
Winnipeg. MB

Jean Connon Unda
BEST Program
Ontario Federation of Labour
Don Mills, ON

Lynne Wells-Orchard
Department of Education & Culture
*Government of Nova Scotia
Halifax, NS

Diane Young
*Laubach Literacy of Canada
St. Catharines, ON

Workers
Union/ACTWU)
Winnipeg, MB

Louise Miller
Federation des travailleurs et
travailleuses du Quebec (FTQ)
Montreal, PQ

*denotes individual was sent by their committee/government to the think tank.

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APPENDIX 2:

A SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN WORKPLACE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

Prepared by Mary Ellen Belfiore for ABC CANADA, October 1995

Introduction:

With the continuing development of workplace education programs across North America, workplace stakeholders are drafting guidelines, principles or statements of good practice. Over the last five years there has been an increased focus given to workplace education by people in management, labour, education and government. It is a timely moment in the history of workplace education to develop principles of good practice.

The purpose of this document is to give an overview of the work already accomplished by Canadian and American workplace stakeholders in the area of good practice. For this report we surveyed 12 formal statements of good practice.

Some of these statements refer to over-arching principles which guide practice and others refer to the delivery and actual operation of workplace education programs. We also surveyed 22 other documents which did not formally outline principles or guidelines and consulted with one program director informally. This report is a summary of the principles of good practice in workplace education that are explicitly and implicitly stated in these documents. (For a list of the resources used in this summary see pages 33 and 34).

Generally, these statements are written by educators or by public funding agencies together with educators and/or labour and management. They exist in a variety of forms': practices orally passed on or informally written, formally published statements, and well-developed documents which comment on the current changes in work and educational settings. Only one of these documents distinguishes between principles and standards.

These principles and good practice statements have several uses:

- establishing standards for good practice
- communicating the educational approach and methods to employers, unions employees, funders, partners, etc.
- ensuring consistency of good practice
- providing a principled foundation for further development
- documenting good practice that will serve as a basis for evaluation and funding

In surveying these documents several common topic areas emerged under which we have organized principles and guidelines for good practice:

- orientation or approach to workplace education

- partnership and participation
- equity
- on-going learning
- methods of education and training
- assessment
- program evaluation
- program delivery
- staff requirements and staff development

1. Orientation or Approach to Workplace Education and Training

A distinction is often made between workplace education and training. Training usually refers to the instruction of specific technical skills needed to perform a job or to obtain credentials for work. Training is aimed at improving skills on discrete job tasks which can range from taking a phone message to operating a complex computer program. The tasks are broken down into steps, learned sequentially and then tested out on the job.

Workplace education is viewed from the broader perspective; learning is part of a socioeconomic, political and educational context. Education addresses individual concerns for personal development as well as work-related skills in a holistic approach, seeing the employee as an active worker, family and community member. Education provides opportunities to learn skills as well as strategies for making informed decisions and controlling one's life. Training can be one part of the broader range of education.

Among the documents surveyed, there is general agreement on the following two principles:

Recognition of prior Learning, Experience and Skills - Current statements of principles and good practice all decry the deficit approach to adult learning. They recognize and value the experiences, knowledge and skills of the adult learners. How extensive this recognition is often depends on whether the approach is education or training as mentioned above. An empowerment model is often cited for the programs emphasizing the education approach. Respect and dignify for all participants involved is paramount.

Confidentiality - Confidentiality is also a principle generally agreed upon although its scope varies. In some cases, the names of the participants in an educational program are confidential as well as their goals and progress. In other cases, confidentiality ensures that interviews, assessment results and examples of work are anonymous and private unless released by the individual.

Who is this education and training for?

The most fruitful question to be asked under orientation or approach is: *Who is this education and training for?* Clearly the underlying goals of education help to determine how education is approached.

For the Worker - Some educators see the worker as the primary focus for education and training. They are in principle completely worker-centred with any benefits accruing to the employer seen as secondary. The aims of the workers and management may indeed overlap and are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Workers' goals can be for both work and for personal development. These voluntary programs are most frequently

labour-Initiated, designed solely by and for workers.

For the Employer and the Trainee - Other educators put the primary focus on the needs of the company. They are addressed by meeting the individual skill development needs of each trainee. This training may coincidentally benefit other aspects of the trainees lives but the stated goals of learning are completely work-related. This approach is frequently termed "functional context" with performance-based objectives. This training may be voluntary or obligatory. One set of guidelines directs planners to involve everyone and refrain from asking for volunteers.

For the Individual and the Organization / Union - Some educators set out to address both individual and collective needs. The personal and work-related needs and interests of the employee are addressed in conjunction with the chose of the organization and union. Collaboration and consensus are necessary for these programs to successfully meet the goals of the primary players and to benefit everyone involved. Learning is for everyone although participation is voluntary

This orientation is distinguished by an integrated and comprehensive view of the workplace. Basic skills are examined and addressed within the context of the whole organization - in relation to the product/service, the processes, equipment, communication and decision-making channels, customer service, avenues for promotion, etc. Workers' skills are a feature of a total, functioning environment and not just connected to one individual or one job.

Setting realistic goals for education and training is of prime importance in this complex setting. Basic skills education and training are not cure-alls for an organization which may also need to address difficulties in other areas (job upgrading, adequate compensation, faulty equipment, diversity issues, methods and channels of communication, etc.). Likewise, labour and management are advised to have realistic expectations for power-sharing. Investing time and overcoming resistance are common roadblocks. Collaboration is a complement to and not a substitute for collective bargaining.

Some educators (mostly in the United States) who have this orientation advocate linking basic skills education with high performance ways of organizing work. They point to high performance workplaces which not only produce high quality products but also provide a high quality working environment for all employees. Employees participate actively in identifying, analyzing and solving problems, in decision-making and in improving their workplaces. This approach also affects their lives, creating stronger individuals and stronger communities. The mission of these educators is to promote education in workplaces where all employees participate actively in improving the organization and their own knowledge, skills and abilities..

2. Partnership and Participation

Partnership is now an essential feature in most workplace education development. AU the documents surveyed concur in their definition of the prime partners in a workplace: workers, management, union and educators. In reference to workplace education development, the government or funder is also seen as a partner.

Except for the labour-initiated/run programs, the statements also insist on equality for all

partners, participation and cooperation by all, and a common sense of ownership. joint involvement is necessary throughout all the stages of a workplace initiative, from initial planning to final evaluations of programs and activities.

The participation levels of employees varies in the statements:

- In labour-initiated/run programs, workers set individual and group goals, determine content, teach the courses and participate in assessment and evaluation.
- In other models, employees work collaboratively with partners on education/ training committees which are responsible for defining the needs, recommending programs and activities to the organization / union and evaluation the results.
- In some cases, employees have input into needs assessment, objectives and evaluations but do not directly participate in the planning and carrying out phases.

One set of principles defines the responsibilities to be taken by all the partners: to improve workplace communications and respond to change.

One set of principles also states the importance of partners contributing to the finding of workplace education development either through monetary contributions or in-kind services.

Another statement recommends that if an effective partnership cannot be formed based on shared goals, then the process and programs should not proceed.

3. Equity

A small number of the statements specifically cite equity as a principle in workplace education development. The principle of equity is used in a number of different areas of work:

- Equity in partnerships defines the relationships and collaborative practices of partners in all activities.
- Equity in access ensures that all groups in a diverse workforce have an opportunity to learn. It may be necessary to meet the needs of different individuals and groups in different ways to arrive at the same ends.
- Equity in service guarantees that all types of organizations can receive assistance without regard for *size,* location, sector, and seasonal, part-time or shift work.
- Equity in marketing respect diversity by the conscious use of inclusive language and visual images.

One document notes that practices based on equity can reach our to special worker populations, create new models of contextualized learning and draw new industries into the field. This document cites some unique examples including organizations that promote employee ownership and decision-making, have a high priority status for local economic development (environmental, agricultural, resources, etc.), and those that must conform to new workplace legislation. APPENDIX 2 continued

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APPENDIX 3:
SETTING THE CONTEXT

SETTING THE CONTEXT - A SUGGESTED GUIDE FOR SELF-INTRODUCTIONS

Instructions:

At the opening of the session on Friday you will have an opportunity to introduce yourself Sharing the unique context of your experience and approach to workplace / workforce education will allow others to better understand your communications during the think tank. In particular, an awareness of the philosophical underpinnings of your context - beliefs that influence, define, and ultimately guide your approach - would appropriately focus the introduction.

Please take a few minutes before tomorrow morning to prepare a two-minute introduction oriented to the above-stated goal. Adherence to the two-minute time frame would be most appreciated. This guide may be helpful.

1. Name:_____

2. Organizational Affiliation:_____

3. Who is your constituency?

_____

_____

4. What aspects of your experience in workplace / workforce education would help others better understand your forthcoming contributions to the think tank?

_____

_____

_____

5. List three words/phrases that capture the beliefs that influence, define, and ultimately guide your approach to workplace/workforce education.

_____

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